

Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Policy

1. Purpose:

- 1.1. The purpose of the complaints, concerns and compliments policy and procedure is to offer an open, honest and fair process by which service users and partner organisations who are dissatisfied with the service they have received from Restitute can express their appreciation, concerns, or complaints and to receive a response.
- 1.2. If the complaint suggests that an employee or volunteer has acted in a way which may have harmed a child, young person, or vulnerable adult the Management of Allegations procedures must be followed.

2. Person Affected:

- 2.1. All staff and volunteers have a role to play in reducing the number of complaints, dealing with concerns courteously and efficiently, and responding to compliments appropriately.

3. Monitoring:

- 3.1. Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the HR department.
- 3.2. This policy will be reviewed annually by the HR Manager and updated where needed.

4. Policy:

- 4.1. Restitute believes that service users and partner organisations are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their individual needs and wishes.
- 4.2. Restitute hopes that service users and partner organisations will be happy with the service provided and that they might like to voice their appreciation to the staff concerned.
- 4.3. All complaints will be treated confidentially. They will only be shared with other agencies if we are concerned that there is a potential risk of harm to others.
- 4.4. Restitute welcomes any suggestions from service users and partner organisations on how we can improve our services and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns that they may have.
- 4.5. Any concerns will be dealt with professionally and promptly to ensure that any issues arising from them are handled appropriately and measurably improve the quality of Restitutes services.
- 4.6. All compliments will be recorded and shared with staff.

5. Responsibilities:

- 5.1. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to adhere to the requirements of the complaints, concerns and compliments policy and procedure.
- 5.2. Restitute will ensure that service users are provided with appropriate information on how to make a complaint, concern, or compliment.
- 5.3. Where Restitute delivers services in partnership with other organisations, staff will also provide details of the other organisation's complaints procedure.
- 5.4. When a complaint is made there are 4 Stages in the process of dealing with it.

6. Principles:

- 6.1. The important principle behind complaints reform is that all organisation's work together, conducting joint investigations. This is to ensure coordinated handling and to provide the complainant with a single response that represents each organisation's final response.
- 6.2. In the client-centered environment, employees/clients/relatives/carers are encouraged to express comments, concerns, complaints and compliments about the treatment and services that they receive in the knowledge that:
- 6.3. They will be taken seriously.
 - They will receive a speedy and effective response.
 - Things will be put right, and appropriate remedy used.
 - Their views will inform learning and improvements in service delivery.
 - There is a system for taking action to address the full range of problems, which occur from minor difficulties to major failures in treatment and care.
 - There will be no adverse effects on their care or that of their families.
- 6.4. NB: It is a disciplinary offence for any member of staff to retaliate against a complainant or their family because they have made a complaint.

7. The 4 Stages:

- 7.1. The 4 Stages are as follows, although the complainant has the right to activate the next stage if dissatisfied with the outcome of the preceding stage:
- 7.2. **Stage 1:** an informal resolution between the complainant and an appropriate staff member;
- 7.3. **Stage 2:** a formal investigation by an appropriate manager at service delivery level;
- 7.4. **Stage 3:** a formal review and adjudication by a senior manager and a member of the Senior Leadership Team [SLT];
- 7.5. **Stage 4:** a formal appeal by the complainant to the Chief Executive.
- 7.6. When a formal complaint is received at Stage 2, the person who has initially received the complaint and been unable to reach a satisfactory resolution will notify their line manager and the Deputy CEO.
- 7.7. The Deputy CEO will maintain a central record of formal complaints received and monitor their timely resolution in accordance with the turnaround times identified below (cf. s.5.2).
- 7.8. If a complaint is considered a 'serious incident,' staff will consult and follow Section 7 of the Serious Incident policy in addition to the procedural requirements of this policy.
- 7.9. A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant harm to Restitute beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or any others who encounter our organisation through its work,
 - loss of Restitute money or assets,
 - damage to Restitute property, and/or
 - harm to Restitute work or reputation.

8. Procedure for complaints made by service users:

- 8.1. If a complaint is about Restitute, then there are four stages that can be used to try to resolve the problem. If a complaint is about the CEO, then it should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Directors (marked private and confidential), which is ultimately responsible as Directors of the organisation.

8.2. **Stage One (Informal):**

- 8.2.1. To make an initial complaint, cause for concern, or any queries regarding the service provided, (Stage 1), they should in the first instance take it up with the appropriate member of staff by either speaking to them or emailing the individual(s) concerned.
- 8.2.2. If the service user does not know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, they should email info@restitute.org and we will endeavour to satisfy their complaint and let them know of any remedial action that is to be taken.
- 8.2.3. All complaints will be acknowledged by the members of staff to whom they were first communicated within five working days of the date it is received.
- 8.2.4. To help Restitute resolve the issue to the best of our ability, the service user should include as much detail as possible regarding the complaint, including any relevant communications or documentation.
- 8.2.5. We will respond to Stage 1 complaints within 7 working days.
- 8.2.6. To ensure service improvement and monitor themes, all Stage 1 complaints should be recorded by the Deputy CEO, even when they have been satisfactorily resolved.

8.3. **Stage Two (Formally registering a complaint)**

- 8.3.1. If the issue remains unresolved or the service user feels they have received an unsatisfactory outcome, these concerns must be presented in writing as a formal complaint to Restitute.
- 8.3.2. The appropriate manager will investigate the complaint and respond to the service user in writing within 5 working days.
- 8.3.3. If more time is needed, the manager who is investigating the complaint will contact the service user with an estimated timeline.
- 8.3.4. A copy of the response will also be sent to the Deputy CEO for monitoring and evaluation.
- 8.3.5. Most complaints should usually be resolved informally at Stage 1 or 2.
- 8.3.6. If the service user is not satisfied with the response to the complaint at Stage 2, the complaint progresses to Stage 3.

8.4. **Stage Three**

- 8.4.1. If the matter is still not resolved, a formal meeting will be held between the service user, the appropriate line manager and a member of the SLT to ensure that it is dealt with comprehensively.
- 8.4.2. A record of the meeting will be made along with documented actions.
- 8.4.3. All parties present at the meeting will review the record's accuracy, sign to agree and receive a copy signifying the procedure's conclusion.
- 8.4.4. A copy of the record will also be sent to the Deputy CEO for monitoring and evaluation.
- 8.4.5. If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 3, the complaint progresses to Stage 4.

8.5. **Stage Four (Appeal)**

- 8.5.1. If the matter cannot be resolved to their satisfaction, then service users have the right to appeal to the Chief Executive. Notification of an appeal will be immediately forwarded to the Chief Executive.

- 8.5.2. Appeals will be dealt with by the Chief Executive or by another member of the Senior Leadership on their behalf and who has not been engaged in the complaint at Stage 3.
- 8.5.3. The service user will be informed by the Chief Executive that the appeal has been received and will be given details of the process to be undertaken.
- 8.5.4. All existing information will be reviewed, and the gathering of further information initiated, as necessary. All available information will be given thorough consideration.
- 8.5.5. The CEO will write within 30 working days of receiving the appeal
- 8.5.6. This will be the final decision of the complaints process and will ensure the CEO has reviewed the investigation, made any further enquiries, and then delivered the reason for the final decision.
- 8.5.7. If the service user is not satisfied with the decision made by the Chief Executive, they must be told how to complain to the Board of Directors, or to another appropriate organisation
- 8.5.8. Service users will be able to access their record if they wish to.
- 8.5.9. All personal details relating to any complaint will be stored confidentially and will only be accessible by the parties involved.
- 8.6. If the service user has exhausted stages one to four of the complaints procedure and is not satisfied that we have followed our process properly and dealt with their complaint fairly, they can request a review of the process.
- 8.7. This can be done in writing or electronically to the CEO (or the Chair of the Board of Directors if it is about the CEO) to request a review of the complaints handling process.

9. *If a complaint is received from another organisation:*

- 9.1. Staff must establish if the complaint relates to a general service delivery concern or a particular service user or employee.
- 9.2. Complaints about the service in general must be dealt with at Stage 2.
- 9.3. The appropriate line manager should review the complaint and advise the Deputy CEO accordingly before responding to the complainant direct.
- 9.4. A copy of the response will also be sent to the Deputy CEO for monitoring and evaluation.

10. *Procedure for complaints made by other individuals or organisations:*

- 10.1. If another organisation complains on behalf of a service user, the complaint should be referred to the relevant member of staff or their line manager.
- 10.2. The relevant manager will explain Restitute's Complaints procedure and suggest that the service user makes a complaint to Restitute directly.
- 10.3. Details of a service user's involvement with Restitute or the nature of their complaint must not be discussed with another agency without their consent.
- 10.4. If the service user does not pursue the complaint, the conversation must still be forwarded to and recorded by the Deputy CEO.
- 10.5. Restitute welcomes complaints from everyone and will work with professional advocates appointed by service users. However, staff must ensure that they have the service user's written consent before they share information with an advocate.

11. *If a friend or family member asks to make a complaint on behalf of a service user:*

- 11.1. The relevant manager should follow a similar procedure as outlined in point 8.2 or 8.3 above.

- 11.2. The relevant manager should try to encourage the service user to make the complaint themselves, emphasizing that they can be accompanied by a friend or family member, or the service user may request that the friend or family member is appointed as an advocate.
- 11.3. If the service user does not pursue the complaint, the conversation must still be forwarded to and recorded by the Deputy CEO.

Last Review Date: August 2024

Next Review Date: August 2025